

# **DNREC Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police Blotter: Feb. 18-24**

*Reminder for the week: Wildlife, fishing, boating area visitors asked to respect natural resources*

**DOVER** – To achieve public compliance with laws and regulations through education and enforcement actions that help conserve Delaware's fish and wildlife resources and ensure safe boating and public safety, DNREC's Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police officers between Feb. 18-24 made 1,184 contacts with hunters, anglers, boaters, and the general public, issuing 43 citations. Officers responded to 40 complaints regarding possible violations of laws and regulations or requests to assist the public. An increased Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police presence continued at the C&D Canal Conservation Area and Michael N. Castle Trail.

## **Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police Actions**

- On Feb. 18, Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police officers, after an investigation into illegal hunting activities that occurred during the November shotgun deer season, arrested Michael Hays, 44, of Harrington, for one count each of killing antlered deer without first purchasing a hunters choice tag, failure to attached deer tag to antlered deer, failure to retain tag on antlered deer, failure to check antlered deer within 24 hours, unlawful to remove antlered deer parts prior to checking, failure to retain tag with antlered deer, possess or transport antlered deer illegally killed, failure to attach tag to antlerless deer, failure to retain tag on antlerless deer, failure to

check antlerless deer within 24 hours, unlawful to remove antlerless deer parts prior to checking, failure to retain tag with antlerless deer, possess or transport antlerless deer illegally killed, and unlicensed hunting near Harrington. Hays was video-arraigned at Justice of the Peace Court 2 and released on his own recognizance, pending a court appearance at a later date.

- On Feb 18, Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police arrested an individual for multiple felonies and deer poaching near Smyrna, issuing the following press release regarding the incident: [DNREC Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police arrest Smyrna man for firearm felonies and deer poaching.](#)

Citations issued by category, with the number of charges in parentheses, included:

**Wildlife Conservation:** Kill antlered deer without first purchasing a hunters choice tag (1), failure to attached deer tag to antlered deer (1), failure to retain tag on antlered deer (1), failure to check antlered deer within 24 hours (1), unlawful to remove antlered deer parts prior to checking (1), failure to retain tag on antlered deer (1), possess or transport antlered deer illegally killed (1), failure to attach tag to antlerless deer (1), failure to retain tag on antlerless deer (1), failure to check antlerless deer within 24 hours (1), unlawful to remove antlerless deer parts prior to checking (1), failure to retain tag on antlerless deer (1), possess or transport antlerless deer illegally killed (2), and unlicensed hunting (1).

**Public Safety:** Possess, purchase, own, or control of a firearm by a person prohibited (19), and possess, purchase, own, or control of a deadly weapon by person prohibited (1).

**Other:** Trespassing after hours on a state wildlife area (8)\*.

*\*Includes citation(s) issued at the C&D Canal Conservation*

Area.

DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife recognizes and thanks the majority of anglers, hunters, and boaters who comply with and support Delaware's fishing, hunting, and boating laws and regulations. Citizens are encouraged to report fish, wildlife, and boating violations to the Delaware Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police by calling 302-739-4580 or through the DENRP Tip app on a smartphone, which can be downloaded free of charge by searching "DENRP Tip" via the Google Play Store or the iTunes App Store. Wildlife violations may also be reported anonymously to Operation Game Theft by calling 800-292-3030, going online to <http://de.gov/ogt>, or using the DENRP Tip app. Verizon customers can connect to Operation Game Theft directly by dialing #OGT.

### ***Are you AWARE?***

DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police reminds visitors to state wildlife areas, fishing piers, and boat launching facilities that these areas are closed to the public from sunset to sunrise unless a person is actively and lawfully engaged in fishing, hunting, or boating in accordance with state regulations and individual wildlife area rules. Individuals not meeting these requirements who are found in these areas between sunset and sunrise face fines up to \$100 for trespassing after hours.

Wildlife area visitors also are reminded that it is illegal to operate motor vehicles – including motorcycles, cars, trucks and SUVs – off established roadways in state wildlife areas. Violators found to have caused damage also will be cited for destruction of state property. In addition, operating a motor vehicle that is not licensed for use on established public roadways – including ATVs – is prohibited both on and off-road on state wildlife areas.

With recent heavy rains and changing temperatures, the ground is especially vulnerable to damage from vehicles operating

off-road. Doing “donuts” or four wheeling in wildlife areas is irresponsible and illegal behavior that damages essential wildlife habitat, as well as generating unnecessary work and expense to repair the damage.

Other noteworthy general state wildlife area rules and regulations to remember include:

- Camping, swimming, fires, target shooting (including paintball), and dumping or littering are prohibited.
- Dog training is permitted only within established dog training areas or during open hunting seasons for the game animals that the dog is being trained to hunt.
- Hunting is permitted only in specified areas and only during designated hunting seasons.
- All areas are designated carry-in, carry-out for trash.

For more information on individual wildlife areas, including the rules and regulations specific to each wildlife area, wildlife area visitors are encouraged to check Delaware wildlife area maps. These maps are available in hard copy at DNREC’s Dover licensing desk in the Richardson & Robbins Building, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, and online at [Delaware Wildlife Area Maps](#).

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**Contact:** Lt. John McDerby, 302-354-1386, or Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police, 302-739-9913